

CHARACTER COUNTS!®

A recommended companion piece for this program is
Hearth Fire Series #11
“Someone’s in the USA....
Showing Respect for the Flag”



Written by: Bettie Lucas
Revised 2015

Formatted by: Judith Jones



Family
Community
Leadership®

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © U.C.C National FCE 2003 All Rights Reserved.
The following material may not be reproduced or distributed in
any form or by any means electronically or mechanically
including photocopying without prior written permission of the
National Association for Family and Community Education.

To copy any or all of this material, write or call for permission:

National Association for Family and Community Education
73 Cavalier Blvd., Suite 106, Florence, KY 41042-5178
Phone: 859-525-6401 Toll free: 877-712-4477
Fax: 859-525-6496 E-mail: nafcehq@fuse.net

CHARACTER COUNTS!® is a service mark of the CHARACTER
COUNTS!®

Coalition a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.

www.charactercounts.org

CITIZENSHIP

When you think of the word “citizenship,” what
do you picture in your mind?

- Is it the country where you were born?
- Is it the patriotism that swells in your heart when the flag passes by in review?
- Is it your participation in community activities or running for public office?

When we use the word “citizen” or “citizenship,” don’t we want the word “GOOD” in front of it?

When we are born, we are citizens of the country of our birth, or in some cases the country where our parents are citizens. The fact that citizenship is naturally bestowed upon us does not make us “good” citizens. We become good by growing and learning what citizenship means and how to be part of the process.

So the question is, when does a person become a “good” citizen? Is there a certain age, such as when they can vote? Or is it something else, something more?

Citizenship is both simple and complex. It means that you do your share to make your community a better place to live.



What is a community? It's a group of people living in the same place and living under the same rules. It is not one set of rules for me and another set of rules for you. A community can be a school or a workplace. At school or at work, you are there for a certain number of hours; for those hours that space is your community. Each "community" will have its own set of rules. At school, the rule may be no running the halls, or staying in your set until the bell rings and the teacher dismisses you. At work, the rule may be no personal telephone calls or do not leave your desk until quitting time.

We all have rules to live by. It doesn't get any easier as you get older. All of our lives we will have rules to follow. Who do we have rules anyway? What do you think the world, your community, workplace, or school would be like without rules? Do you think you would want to live, work or go to school there? Why?

When we think about the rules we follow, let's think about playing a game together. If we are going to play softball, do you think both teams should follow the same rules? What happens to the game when one team plays by some other rules? Rules just make things easier for us. By following the rules, we will do it the right way the first time.

Authority is something that as a good citizen we must learn to recognize. There will always be someone in authority over us. In the classroom, the teacher is in authority. The teachers answers to the principal, who answers to the superintendent, who answers to the school board, who answers to the people who elected them.

Think of it as a symphony orchestra. Each instrument has their own individual notes to play, and they don't always play at the same time. But there is a pattern and plan that fits it all together to make beautiful music. Sometimes there is a solo part for one, but it takes all of them playing together to make the composition work. The conductor keeps his eye on the music (the plan) and the players read the music and watch the conductor for their cues.

A few years ago in a place called Midland, TX, the community came together to rescue a little girl named Jessica from a gas well into which she had fallen. This community was determined to do whatever needed to removed her from that well. After several days of effort by many friends and neighbors, their mission was accomplished. Jessica was rescued. If something like this were to happen in your town, what would you be able to do to help? You might be able to help feed the workers, loan out your sleeping bag, give them blankets, loan them a tent and cot, be there for support, be positive about the outcome.

Can you name some real needs in your community?

What could you do about those needs?

What happens when people decide that these needs are not their problem?

How can you get other people involved in making the community a better place?

Do you think you will be able to do anything in your community that will make a difference? (Make a needed change or improvement.)

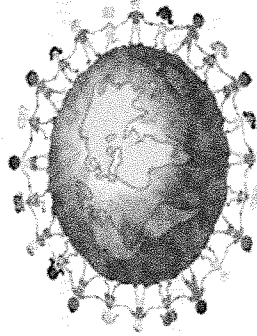
With citizenship come rights, duties, responsibilities and privileges. Do you know what each of these words mean?

Rights – *freedom, permission, authorization.* Example: *We have the right to freedom of speech and the right to bear arms.*

Duties – *obligation.* Example: *It is our duty to serve on a jury if we are called.*

Responsibility: *accountability, answerability.* Example: *It is our responsibility to pay taxes. We will be held accountable if we don't.*

Privilege: *prerogative, advantage.* Example: *We have the privilege of voting for the candidate of our choice.*



Being a good citizen means you will work to make a difference in the world. You want to make the world a better place to live. But, the world is so big, how can you make that kind of difference? You start in your little corner of the world: The place where you live, your community. Everyone else begins in their little corner. Pretty soon there are no little corners left and a lot of good gets done.

It is the same in our Federal Government. Even the President of the United States has to answer to someone. Do you know who that is? **WE THE PEOPLE!** He answers to the people who are citizens of this country and vote.

A community is a place where we live together under the same rules with people in different areas of authority. But how does a community really function and what does a community do?

People working together through cooperation and participation is what builds a community. What does cooperation mean? In school it means doing what the teacher says to do, when she says to do it, and the way she says to do it. It's basically the same in a community. In order to cooperate with each other, we have to know what the plan is, how the plan is to be put into action, and what our part of that action might be. Participation is the key to being a good citizen. We must *participate*, be *involved* and *contribute* to the plan. You cannot make a difference without being *involved*.

Are you an active participant in your community? Here are a few ways you can get involved.

Read your local newspaper to find out what is going on in your community.

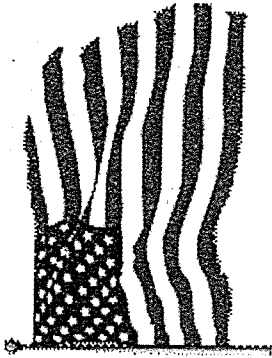
Attend public hearings held in your area, or attend public hearings/meetings held by your state legislature.

Volunteer to help out with a community event.

If there is something you are passionate about, write a letter to the editor.



Discussion Guide



Do you know the name of our National Anthem? *The Star Spangled Banner.*

Can you sing it?

Who wrote it? *Francis Scott Key*

Do you know what inspired him to write it? *Battle of Fort McHenry in 1812.*

When the National Anthem is played or sung in a public assembly, what are you supposed to do? *Stand, placing your right hand over your heart and gentlemen should remove their hats.*

What are some of the names we call our flag? *Old Glory, Star Spangled Banner, Stars and Stripes.*

Who designed the first flag? *Francis Hopkinson – a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Continental Congress.*

Who sewed the first flag? *Betsy Ross.*

What do the stripes on the flag stand for? *Thirteen original colonies.*

What do the stars on the flag stand for? *A star for each state.*

What part of the flag is called the Union? *The blue field with the stars.* A way to remember this is that the stars represent all 50 states – The United States – a union or joining together.

How many rules are there regarding the display of the flag? *43.*

Do you know the words to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag? How often do you say the Pledge? Do you know what those words really mean?

I – Me

Pledge – Promise

Allegiance – My loyalty

To the flag – Symbol of freedom

Of the United – Those who have come together

States – Individual communities that came together to makeup our 50 states.

Of America – Who we are

And to the Republic – Our democracy – of the people, by the people, and for the people.

For which it stands – the flag is our national symbol of freedom

One nation – Out of many, one – one voice, one mind – one people – Americans!

Under God – Our nation was built upon faith and religious freedom. God, the Supreme Being, Sovereign Ruler and Creator of the Universe.

Indivisible – Together, we will not divide.

With liberty – Freedom, independence

And justice – Truth in action, fair dealing

For all – For everyone who is a citizen of this great country.